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The Case of Andrew Adams

Recently, Andrew Adams, age 50, of Akron, Ohio, was convicted in the federal court in Cleveland of a fancy check-juggling operation much too complicated to detail here but which eventually entangled Adams to the extent of \$120,000. Soon to be sentenced, Adams has no background of prior arrests or involvement in criminal activity. He is—or was—an “expediter” or consultant for Akron electrical contractors, and known locally as an intense “anti-Communist.”

During World War II, he served with the OSS and, in this way, came to know a Washington attorney, Earl Brennan, who was in charge of certain operations for the OSS in the Adriatic. Both Adams and Brennan were registered as agents of the Parti National Haitien, which formerly had its headquarters in Mexico. They terminated their registrations in 1963, since by then most of the officials of the party were living in this country. Representatives of the party were introduced to Mr. Brennan by Serafino Romauldi, the AFL-CIO's Inter-American representative, currently director of the American Institute for Free Labor Democracy. [See “Meddling in Latin America: Dubious Role of AFL-CIO” by Stanley Meisler, *The Nation*, February 10, 1964.] A new registration, filed on September 11, 1964, listed Dr. Roger Rigaud as agent for the Haitian National Democratic Union, a group which included many of the elements from the Parti National.

Adams contends that his check manipulations were incidental to his efforts to raise money for the Parti National. He says that any money he raised was forwarded to his principals—a statement that appears to be confirmed by investigation of his personal financial records. Oddly enough, the *Akron Journal* carried stories about the activities of Brennan and Adams. Although Duvalier is a stout “anti-Communist,” Adams apparently thought that he was harboring Communists in his regime or that he might be getting ready to make a deal with Castro. In fact, as Al Burt pointed out in last week's *Nation*, Duvalier is a crude but enthusiastic practitioner of diplomatic blackmail who likes to have a few Communists about, the better to loosen purse strings in Washington.

The point to note is that the original plan to raise money for the Parti National was conceived in 1962. When Adams was arrested, he told the FBI that he was employed by the CIA. That is probably not true, but it seems that assurances were given Adams and Brennan in Washington that it would be all right for the Parti National to raise money for the purpose of overthrowing Duvalier; in fact, there were some vague statements that if the venture succeeded, the expenses might be refunded. The assurances were apparently phone calls, one to Cleveland, one to Akron, produced of the “go ahead and see what you can do” variety.

Two FBI agents interviewed Adams in his attorney's office. At one point, the attorney, C. T. Cherpas of Akron, was asked to withdraw because, it was explained, the interrogation involved “national security.”

Part of the fund-raising activities presumably consisted in attempts to sell concessions for gambling, oil exploration, etc., all contingent on the success of the “revolution.” A representative of the new Haitian National Democratic Union is reported to have made trips to Las Vegas in quest of possible investors in a future Haitian gambling enterprise. The bank knew, in a general way, about Adams' Haitian operations: in fact it had been promised a \$2 million deposit—contingent, again, on the success of the venture. Since this fantastic scheme was first conceived in 1962, it is quite possible that it did have the indirect sanction of the CIA. At that time both the CIA and the State Department might have been interested in engineering Duvalier's ouster. But then came the disastrous Bay of Pigs fiasco which dampened Washington's enthusiasm for the hit-or-miss, often quite boyish antics of the CIA. Apparently the unlucky Adams got caught in the backwash of these murky intrigues.

The Haitian episode is merely one of many similar gambols of the CIA that warrant public airing, but of course the public will never know what really happened. In the meantime, it might not be amiss if the daily press were to check into the Adams case. Two telephonic facts recited here.